

# Trail Talk

**Conasauga Ranger District**

**August - September 2009**



*Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another*

*- Erma Bombeck*

*And the Winners are ....*



**Wanda Brown – Volunteer of the Year**



**2009 Top Guns  
Jim Holland, Amos Burrell, Jim Bishop,  
Troy Brown**

***Congratulations*** to our award winners and all of our volunteers for an outstanding Fiscal Year 2009. We count some 216 volunteers contributing 7,014 hours to the Conasauga Ranger District this past year. Thank you for your hard work; thank you for your attention to safety; and, thank you for your dedication to making our national forest a better place for all to enjoy. With your help, we look forward to another successful year.



**August** – It has been a wet summer and early fall which thankfully has brought us back from a severe rainfall deficit in North Georgia. However, the rainy weather has not deterred Team Conasauga from its volunteer efforts. **Junior Kyle, Melinda and Lakota Towe, and Danny Wilson** kicked off this month when they visited Jacks River Fields to perform campground maintenance duties...**Wanda Brown** spent time

updating the volunteer website...a volunteer team cleared blowdowns and trimmed brush from the Beech Bottom

Trailhead to the Rough Ridge Trail with crosscut saws, axes and loppers. The trail crew consisted of **Jim Bishop, Troy and Wanda Brown, Tony and Carol Cook, Bob and Mary Korch, Wayne Pattillo, and Mike Plochinski**...**Martha Fillingham and Carlos Martel** assisted the Forest Service in a road improvement project at Jacks River Fields...And, **Backcountry Horsemen of North GA members Martha Fillingham, Carlos and Carol Martel, Jim McGarvey, and Carol Upshaw** participated in a recon of existing trails and new trail possibilities in the Jacks River Fields area...**Gene and Amy Findley** bushhogged the Dry Creek Trailhead and Equestrian Parking Area one day...**Michael Young** assisted in the construction of fish structures on Rock Creek over a 2 day period...The Chestnut Lead and Conasauga River Trails were the site of this month's scheduled trail maintenance workday. The following volunteers made short work of the trimming and slingblading needs on this 2.8-mile section of hiking trail: **Tom and Tannis Blackwell, Jim Bishop, Charlie Crider, Vickie Davis, Charles Gowing, Sylvia Hardin, Jim Leatherwood, Carlos Martel, Gail Milner, Wayne Pattillo, Mike Plochinski, Tim and Donna Tate, Rose White, Troy and Wanda Brown, Amos Burrell, Scott, Janet and Zack Jordan, Bob and Mary Korch, and Taylor Slate**...**Troy and Wanda Brown** had a long but productive day clearing blowdowns from the Hickory Creek Trail from Rice Camp Trailhead to Thomas Creek...Campground Host **John Carey** held down the fort at Lake Conasauga keeping the bears at bay...**Fred Pilcher** worked 3 days mowing and weedeating the Pilcher's Pond area and Keown Falls Road and working on the John's Mountain Overlook...**Wanda Brown** put some more volunteer time into the Team Conasauga accomplishment spreadsheet...**Troy and Wanda Brown** had a good day trimming/slingblading a section of the East Cowpen Trail above Rice Camp Trailhead...**Fred Pilcher** returned to maintain several developed recreation sites on the west side over 4 consecutive days...And, **Troy Brown** sharpened slingblades for an upcoming workday. Volunteers put forth **630.5 valuable hours** to the maintenance and improvement of National Forest trails and recreation sites this month. Thank you folks for your valuable time in "giving back" to the cause.



Enjoying a well deserved break after a day on the Chestnut Lead Trail.



**September** – The brush is now cleared from the East Cowpen Trail from Rice Camp Trailhead to Hickory Ridge thanks to the efforts of **Troy and Wanda Brown**...**Melinda Towe** and her dad, **Junior Kyle** took care of the routine maintenance chores at Jacks River Fields... **John Carey**



continued his campground host duties at Lake Conasauga through the Labor Day Holiday. He then turned over the hosting reins to **James Workman** who plans to stay on at the Recreation Area until it closes in November...**Evelyn and Lou Thompson** travelled from Tampa to begin their campground host duties at the Pocket...**Fred Pilcher** continued his outstanding volunteer



**Thanks to the Backcountry Horsemen of North GA Jacks River Fields Campground is a beautiful place.**

Panther Creek Trail in just one (long) day's time...**Michael Young** returned for 2 more days of fish structure construction on Rock Creek...our dynamic duo **Troy and Wanda Brown** gave us a big headstart on the Rough Ridge Trail slingblading/trimming project when they completed a 10-mile out and back hike and single-handedly knocked out nearly 1 mile of the thick brush removal...**Junior Kyle and Melinda Towe** returned to Jacks River Fields to maintain the campground...If not for **Amos Burrell**, Working Weekend #54 would have been a total bust due to the heavy rainfall and flooding that occurred over that weekend. However, after backpacking down to the Jacks River, **Amos** and Forest Service employees were able to accomplish a great deal of slingblading on the Rough Ridge Trail before the rain hit the following morning...**Jim Holland and Chuck Ramsey** and a Forest Service employee served as co-instructors for a chainsaw certification class hosted by the Conasauga Ranger District. Volunteers participating in the training included **Brandon Blair, Barrett Bourne, Bill Hester, Steve Jersey, Linda and Richard Norton, Tom Shope, and Melanie Trumbo**...The Pinhoti Trail at Strawberry Mountain is clear of blowdowns now thanks to the chainsaw work of **Larry Wheat and Jim McGarvey**...**Fred Pilcher** joined Forest Service employees in the maintenance of the Houston Valley Trailhead and the mowing of Pilcher's Pond...**Junior Kyle and Melinda Towe** returned to Jacks River Fields for another round of campground maintenance...And, on the last day of the month, a strong contingent of equestrians with the **Backcountry Horsemen of North GA** completed the challenging slingblading/trimming project on Rough Ridge Trail. These hard-charging volunteers included **Derrick and Misty Callihan, Martha Fillingham, Junior Kyle, Carlos and Carol Martel, Kathleen Corcoran, Aubrey Thomas, and Danny Wilson**. The "TEAM" logged an incredible 941 volunteer hours this month. You guys are awesome!





It is hunting season in the North Georgia Mountains and throughout the eastern United States. State Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) have hunting seasons that are generally much shorter than the general statewide season that applies to all huntable land outside of WMAs. Most of the east side of the Conasauga District, including the Cohutta Wilderness, falls within the Cohutta WMA. The

John's Mountain WMA encompasses the John's Mountain area on the west side of the district. Refer to the official Georgia 2009 – 2010 Hunting Seasons & Regulations or go to: [www.gohuntgeorgia.com](http://www.gohuntgeorgia.com) for more information. Regardless of whether you are a hunter or not, there are a number of things you can do to keep yourself safe in the woods at this time of year...



Be aware! Learn when and where hunts are scheduled, particularly firearms hunts, and avoid these areas if possible. Consider letting the hunters have the woods for these short time periods.



Plan your outing to start later and end earlier in the day. Most hunters hunt early morning and are out of the woods before noon. They often return late in the afternoon to continue their hunt.



Wear bright colored clothing. Blaze orange is best. Do not wear white, black or brown colors which could be mistaken for a deer or bear.



Stay on the trail. Avoid cross-country travel where you would most likely encounter a hunter.



Travel in groups to be more recognizable.

## 2009-2010 Hunting Seasons

### Cohutta Wildlife Management Area

Archery Season: September 12 – 30, October 4 – 16

**Firearms Season:** October 8 – 11, **December 2 - 6**

Small Game Season: October 17 – November 30, December 7 – February 28

**Special Feral Hog Hunt: February 5 - 11**

Turkey Season: March 20 – May 15

### John's Mountain Wildlife Management Area

Archery Season: September 12 – October 16

**Adult/Child Firearms Hunt: October 30 – November 1**

**Firearms Season: November 24 - 28**

Small Game Season: October 17 – 28, November 2 – 22, November 29 – February 28

Turkey Season: March 20 – May 15

### Northern Zone Firearms Deer Season

Land outside WMAs including National Forest: October 17 – January 1

## Conasauga District Trail Volunteers Captures REI Grant

[www.TeamConasauga.org](http://www.TeamConasauga.org)



Congratulations are in order to Conasauga District Trail Volunteers, Inc (CDTV) for its recent award of a grant from REI, Inc. The grant will provide camping gear and volunteer incentives in support of the upcoming November 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> Working Weekend volunteer trail maintenance event. Awards to the Conasauga Ranger District “Top Gun” volunteer performers for 2009 are also supported by the grant. REI has been a strong supporter of the Conasauga District volunteer program since its inception back in 1990.

### *A Farewell Message from Bob and Mary Korch*

As most of you know, we have set off on an adventure to live our dream in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. That dream also includes supporting the trails out here in the ruggedly beautiful Rocky Mountains. The encouragement some of you provided over these past few months helped give us the courage to move to Steamboat. And, knowing that many of you will visit made moving a little less difficult. Please know that you will always be welcome if you can find your way out to NW Colorado.



It has been a privilege to work alongside and get to know many of you over the years as we shared our passion of “giving back” through trail maintenance and other activities in support of the Forest Service. The more we gave back, though, the more we received. And that was largely because of you. The special camaraderie of Team Conasauga, SORBA, BCHNG and other groups has been truly inspiring to us and will never be forgotten. We will always treasure you, our special trail friends.

We also want to share our hope that you see our departure as not leaving a void, but that it creates opportunities. Yes, more waterbars that you can maintain, new growth to slingblade and more blowdowns to remove. And there are also ways where you can support the Forest Service behind the scenes so that Team Conasauga continues to sustain itself and continue to grow over the coming years.

Thus, we would like to leave each of you with a challenge. That you sign up for one additional work trip over the coming year. Or reach out to Larry Thomas or the Board of Directors of Team Conasauga and ask how you might be able to help out behind the scenes. Your assistance, no matter how small or large, will indeed make a difference.

Take care, always!

Mary and Bob Korch

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*Editors Note: We wish Bob and Mary all the best as they begin their new journey. We will certainly miss the leadership and dedication these two veteran trail volunteers have brought to our Team Conasauga program. But just as much, we will miss their friendship.*

### **Conasauga Lore ...**

**RICE CAMP**...Jim Rice (1866 to 1953) was a prominent farmer who lived in the on the Conasauga River. He maintained a one room cabin in the mountains (location unknown) that served as a base camp for tending and maintaining hogs and cattle which he allowed to free range. Rice Camp Branch, as we know it now, was commonly known to the local people back then as "Mitchell Creek". The whole area bordered by Jacks River on the north, Hickory Ridge on the east, East Cowpen on the south, and Mitchell Creek on the west was a popular hunting ground commonly referred to as "the Rice Camp Country".

**PELLOM PLACE**...Rice Camp Country was mostly wild land, but there was a "Pellom Place" located on the east prong of Rice Camp Branch in a flat next to the Rice Camp Trail. Few signs of the home place remain. The most telling sign are the 5 or 6 walnut trees still living at the site, which are commonly found in association with old home sites.

From the Pellom Place, the Rice Camp Trail goes up a hollow to a low gap with a grove of very large white oaks. In this gap is considerable evidence of a logging camp and sawmill which was located there in the late 1940s after A.A. Chable sold the land to the Jacks River Game & Fish Preserve, Inc. Bedsprings and other metal artifacts may be observed. In fact, "the bedsprings" are now a fairly well known landmark to users of the Rice Camp Trail.

\*Historical information provided by Shepherd L. Howell

## About the Volunteer Pass

### 1. What is the Volunteer Pass?

Congress authorized the Secretaries of the Departments of Agriculture and Interior to issue an annual pass to a volunteer in exchange for significant volunteer services performed by the volunteer. "Significant" is defined as 500 hours.



### 2. Which agencies participate in the Volunteer Pass program?

Volunteer hours may be accrued at Forest Service, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Land Reclamation sites. These sites will issue and honor the Volunteer Pass at locations where Entrance Fees or Standard Amenity Fees (such as at visitor centers) are charged. It does not cover discounts on expanded amenity fees or concessionaire fees such as camping, RV hook-ups, boat launching, or backcountry permits.

### 3. Does a volunteer have to accrue the 500 hours in one year?

No. There is no specific time frame in which the volunteer hours must be accrued. Once the 500 hour requirement is reached and a pass is issued, the volunteer's "Pass hours" are reset to zero and the count begins again.

### 4. How long is the Volunteer Pass valid?

The Volunteer Pass is valid for 12 months from the month of issuance.



## Conasauga Bits and Pieces

- East Cowpen Road, FS 51, now open. The Jigger Creek ford has been repaired from the recent flooding and the East Cowpen Road is now open providing access to the Horseshoe Bend and Rice Camp/East Cowpen/Hickory Creek Trailheads.
- Blowdowns aplenty. The heavy rainfall and flooding we have experienced this fall has resulted in soft ground conditions and numerous reports of blowdowns. We know of blowdowns on the Rice Camp, Hickory Ridge, and Conasauga River Trails. There are undoubtedly many more we are unaware of at this time. On your next trail hike or ride, should you encounter trees down, please let us know. Be as specific as possible as to their location and number so they will be easier to find and remove.
- Campgrounds closing for the season. The Lake Conasauga Campground and Picnic Area and the Pocket Campground will both close for the season on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Pocket Picnic Area is open year around. You can still fish at Lake Conasauga using the boat ramp access road and parking area.
- Newsletter contributions requested. Would you like to contribute an article, photo, or safety tip to this newsletter? What about a poem, a camping tip or a personal outdoor experience you would like to share? This is YOUR newsletter and your input into its content is encouraged. Let us hear from you.





#### **Mark Your Calendars:**

- **November 13-14** Working Weekend #54, Chestnut Lead and lower Tearbitches (hiking) Trails – water bars. Car camping at the Ballfield Group Camping Area Friday (and Saturday?).
- **December** No scheduled work days
- **January 16** Pinhoti Trail maintenance at either Horn Mountain or Rocky Face
- **February 19-20** Working Weekend #55, Beech Bottom (multi-use) Trail – water bars. Car camping at the Cottonwood Patch Campground.
- **March 20** To be announced

**Note:** In addition to these scheduled workdays, we are trying to find some volunteers who are interested in working independently or with a small group to tackle these projects and others.

- Volunteers to remove blowdowns on Hickory Ridge, Rice Camp, etc. etc.
- Volunteer(s) to maintain water bars on Songbird Trail and Tower Trail

**If you are interested, please contact Ed at 706-695-6736 x 118 or e-mail [elang@fs.fed.us](mailto:elang@fs.fed.us)**





## *2009 Volunteer Picnic*

